

Furthering Talent Connect: Supporting information.

About Young Sounds UK

Musical talent is everywhere but opportunity isn't: financial and social barriers too often get in the way. Young Sounds is here to change this. For 25 years we've supported talented young people from low-income families, helping them to overcome these barriers. Whatever the genre, our programmes help young musicians from across the UK to fulfill their musical potential:

- **Identifying Musical Talent and Potential:** training teachers in how to spot young people's musical potential
- **Furthering Talent Connect:** targeting and sustaining young people's emerging talent through strategic support
- **Awards:** funding young talent UK wide through annual grants and tailor-made help for individual musicians
- **Innovation and Research:** leading new thinking and action on talent development

Furthering Talent Connect

As of 2024, Furthering Talent Connect consists of two distinct programme tiers, operating across 20 Music Hubs in England.

Our 10 *Ambassador Hubs* support the individual musical progression of over 400 young people via a holistic programme designed to help them overcome barriers and keep learning. *Ambassador Hubs*

- Bradford
- Greater Manchester
- Manchester
- Hull
- Lewisham
- Resonate (Liverpool)
- Severn Arts (Worcestershire)
- Sheffield
- Sunderland
- The Music Partnership (North-West Midlands)

From April 2024 onwards, Furthering Talent Connect will expand to 20 Hubs with the recruitment of 10 new *Connector Hubs*. The key difference between *Ambassador* and *Connector Hubs* is that the *Connector Hubs* won't be directly supporting a cohort of young people via the original Furthering Talent programme. Instead, they will be focusing on inclusion and access for ALL young people and families in their area, and beyond.

In both *Ambassador* and *Connector Hubs*, there will be a *Connector* and their role is to connect young people and families with musical experiences in their local area. They exist to find appropriate opportunities and share valuable information on how best to support young people's musical development. They will become a highly visible point of contact for any young person or family who are unsure about where to go for information, advice or guidance. They will have a presence on social media and proactively reach out to families and young people, making themselves available as a source of help. They'll also establish connections and progression pathways with local schools, networks, musical organisations and beyond.

Our 10 *Connector Hubs* are:

- Berkshire
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

- Coventry
- Cumbria
- Devon and Torbay
- Hertfordshire
- Lincolnshire
- Norfolk
- North-Tyneside
- Waltham Forest

The Connector role in *Connector Hubs* is one day per week. It is 2 days per week in *Ambassador Hubs* as they will also continue coordinating the original programme.

The Furthering Talent programme

Furthering Talent aims to effect significant change in how the musical potential of young people from low-income families is identified and supported. This change agenda is summarised in the following outcomes we want to achieve in the new Programme phase Furthering Talent Connect, beginning in April 2023.

- **Young people have an increased sense of ownership of their musical journey. They have experienced the joy of becoming better musicians, of discovering new music, and playing with others.**
- **Young people have an increased self-belief, resulting from playing an instrument to the best of their ability and seeing themselves succeed musically**
- **Music leaders have an increased understanding of how to implement a young people-centred approach to instrumental and vocal teaching and musical progression**

Programme elements

We work with our partner Music Hubs to train instrumental and class teachers in how to spot musical potential through our CPD Programme, Identifying Musical Talent and Potential. Once equipped with the knowledge of what the key facets of musical potential look like they identify and nominate children for involvement in the programme.

From April 2023 to March 2026, and thanks to significant support from both Youth Music and Arts Council England, we will continue supporting at least 600 children across 10 Ambassador Music Hub partners. These partners are Bradford, Greater Manchester, Hull, Lewisham, Resonate (Liverpool), My Hub (Manchester), Sheffield, The Music Partnership (Staffordshire/Telford/Stoke), Sunderland and Severn Arts (Worcestershire).

Each young person on the programme benefits from:

Instrumental tuition: Each child will receive weekly tuition either individually, in pairs or in small groups and will be funded by Hub partners.

Personalised support for each child's musical progression needs: Throughout the programme each child works with their instrumental teacher to agree an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Together they set three goals for their musical progression, which they review and update at the end of each term. Wherever possible this will be done via the **Online-ILP** tool developed in partnership with Charanga. The Connector then works with local partners to further support each child's musical progression. Each child has a personal budget to help them progress their musical goals (e.g. tickets to a concert, funding for new music etc.).

Other key elements of the programme include:

Opportunities: Many participants are musically isolated, with limited musical opportunities. In this next

phase we will continue to collaborate with our partner Music Hubs to continue to enable the Furthering Talent cohort of students to access the resources and opportunities provided by local/regional (or national) musical organisations, across genres. This broadens students' musical horizons and introduces them to new music making experiences as diverse as opera at Glyndebourne and West End musicals

Get Togethers: We will hold at least one Get Together event in each area per term (three per year), together with a partner organisation. Parents/carers and other family members are invited, and help is available for transport costs so that this isn't a barrier. Examples include Ipad composition days, workshops followed by a concert by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, working in a recording studio to play, mix and record their own compositions and exploring Blues through Dalcroze practice. We've also introduced informal sharing concerts at which young musicians are invited to perform to their peers, family and friends.

Connectors: Communicating effectively with young people and their families to ensure that their musical needs are fully met can be difficult, particularly when many participants are living in challenging family circumstances. A Local Furthering Talent Connector is engaged to work in each Hub to coordinate communications on a local level between all stakeholders and reduce barriers to access: their role is crucial to Furthering Talent's success. See below for a full role description.

Communities of support: The Get Togethers outlined above are designed to help both the young people and their parents/carers feel part of a network: young people with their peers and parents/carers with theirs. Children can often be the only one in their year still playing an instrument and so it's very important to develop this sense of belonging. Equally if parents get the chance to meet and discuss their child's music-making with others in similar circumstances this can be really encouraging, enabling children to get better support at home too. We also host termly **Teachers' Forums** in each Hub, to which all Furthering Talent instrumental teachers are invited. All attendees are paid for their time and the events provide a space for teachers to discuss their students' progress, reflect on their practice and share ideas on the development of the programme in their area.

New programme phase: 2023 to 2026

In 2023 Furthering Talent entered a new phase called Furthering Talent Connect, thanks to major funding from Youth Music and Arts Council England.

We've continued working with 10 of our current Hub partners from April 2023, supporting upwards of 400 young people directly. These 10 partners will become **Connector Hubs**. **The Connector role will be key:** they'll continue the hands-on support for the families who are part of the programme but they will also reach out to identify more young people in need of support. They will provide information bespoke to the needs

of each child and identify opportunities for progression, from ensembles to funding. They will be a highly visible point of contact for young people and families across the Hub region.

In this new phase we will further expand the child-centered model, supporting young people from low-income families to progress on their individual musical journeys. Furthering Talent is core to Young Sounds' mission to *give talent a chance*: we'll **continue to pursue ways of embedding the Furthering Talent approach as standard Hub practice**, giving children facing financial and other barriers a musical life they'd otherwise not have. We'll continue to target children facing the most significant obstacles to accessing music education.

Giving young people agency to shape their own musical journeys will remain central and we'll be further developing the **Charanga hosted Online-ILP** before its official launch to the sector in September 2023. Connectors will then play a significant role in advocating and disseminating the tool across the sector within their regions.

Workforce development will remain central with tutors having access to Young Sounds' refreshed training package as well as continuing to host the afore mentioned termly Teacher Forums in each Hub.



Furthering Talent

We'll develop our mentoring offer by recruiting and training a Young Sounds Alumni Mentor for each Hub. They will work closely with the Connector to support them in a range of ways; communicating with families, attending Get Togethers and providing individual mentoring sessions for young people taking part. They will also help with the collection of evidence for the programme evaluation.

In 2024, Young Sounds (then known as Awards for Young Musicians) published an in-depth look at the last 5 years of the programme, exploring the various successes and challenges, meeting the people who have been a key part of the programme and examining the impact it's had. It will provide some helpful additional reading, which you can find [here](#).