

Breaking the mould: new models for First Access in Wiltshire



Wiltshire's Music
Education Hub

One of the main elements of the [National Plan for Music Education](#) is for Music Education Hubs to ensure all children and young people learn a musical instrument through whole class teaching. A tall order perhaps, when primaries are facing continued budget cuts, a decline in specialist music teachers, and in some cases, greater responsibility through academisation. In Wiltshire, despite these constraints, new, sustainable models for achieving this and other National Plan goals are emerging from a more streamlined hub. Anita Holford reports on the first year of a new approach to First Access in Wiltshire.

For all hubs, one of the largest and most important areas of work is, as the National Plan puts it in Core Role 1, to 'Ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, other than voice, through whole class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year, but for a minimum of a term, of weekly tuition on the same instrument.' Schools are expected to have a programme in place, and the Hub's role is to support this.

Up until 2015, the model for these 'First Access' or 'Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)' programmes in Wiltshire was relatively traditional. Schools would be offered programmes delivered by tutors from the music service. The new Wiltshire approach defines clearer outcomes for First Access and offers schools subsidy towards the cost of hiring tutors in. The Hub is also incubating a range of alternative approaches and models to meet the needs of a wider range of schools and this evolving landscape.

A new hub – and a new approach to First Access

When Wiltshire Music Connect launched in its present form later that year, it was a new, skinnier entity: not led by a music service, and with no contracted teaching workforce – meaning First Access had to change. New models for delivering the programmes were created, and have been trialled in schools.

[Martin Stewart](#), Development Manager and First Access lead at the Hub explains: "We wanted to make sure that we were able to help connect schools with tutors and provide an appropriate level of quality assurance. We also wanted to encourage them to make informed choices about what form First Access should take in their school and take greater ownership around the sustainability of the work. Really importantly, we wanted to make sure there was a broad offer that could appeal to a wider range of young people. All of that meant setting up an [Associate](#)



[Provider](#) scheme, encouraging a wider range of tutors to deliver First Access, and piloting some new models and ways of working."

Since September 2016, schools in Wiltshire have been able to choose from five different ways of providing First Access programmes to their pupils, if they're to receive Hub subsidy (25-50 per cent of the full cost of a half-hour lesson, depending on the number of pupils involved or size of year 3 intake). These range from traditional instruments, to more modern music technology-based programmes; and programmes can be delivered either by freelance tutors or by school staff themselves.

"I'd like schools to be able to report on the benefits to pupil achievement, attainment and behavior. First Access isn't just a bolt-on, it's a holistic part of the school and its culture of learning." Martin Stewart, Development Manager, Wiltshire Music Connect.

Programmes can be from one term, to a full year. In most cases they run for a full year (some schools have use a carousel system, having lessons in a different instrument each term). In schools in Wiltshire who provided First Access in 2015-16, 91% were running it for the whole school year. Nationally, only 66 per cent run it for a year and 72 per cent for two terms or more. (*Key Data on Music Education Hubs 2015, National Foundation for Educational Research, October 2016*).



We connect children and young people in our county with a broad range of music making opportunities and experiences to compliment and support what schools offer. Because music is excellent for developing young minds.

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First Access programmes in Wiltshire

See www.wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk/schools

Programmes delivered by Associate Providers:

- *Traditional First Access (Associate Provider)* – the school contracts Wiltshire Music Connect ‘Associate’ musicians to deliver First Access on instruments. Musicians that schools already work with need to become Associates in order for the school to qualify for subsidy. Instruments can be hired from the Hub at a low cost but can’t be taken home by pupils. Cost: £40.80 per hour/£20.40 per session minus Hub subsidy see below. [See case study.](#)
- *First Access via Skype (aka Hit It!)** – in partnership with Wiltshire Music Centre, involving two African drumming tutors delivering live-streamed and pre-recorded classes from the Centre. A whole class drum set is included. Costs as little as £5 per session (pre-recorded) or various option for live online sessions. [See case study.](#)
- *iPads First Access** – an Associate musician teaches music and composition skills to pupils and teachers through GarageBand on iPads. iPads are included - one per pair of students. Cost: as per Traditional, and free hire of iPads. [See case study.](#)
- *Special schools bespoke First Access** – a pilot programme involving instruments/technology available in the school, plus teacher CPD. Cost: varies. [See case study.](#)

How subsidy works:

Schools apply to the Hub for subsidy, then pay tutors directly. Subsidy is from £5.10 to £10.20 per session depending on numbers of pupils ie 25 per cent of costs for up to 30 pupils in year 3, rising to 50 per cent for 61 pupils or more.

Programmes delivered by school staff:

- *First Access in a box/Ocarinas** – a programme to help teachers who aren’t necessarily music specialists to teach musical skills using Ocarinas. Includes teacher training sessions from an Ocarina specialist, use of a set of Ocarinas which children can take home, and music books. Cost: £100 (full cost £300). [See case study.](#)
- *First Access iPads* – schools can book an iPad surgery to help them to teach music through iPads, and if they don’t have their own, can hire an iPad set.
- *First Access instrumental* – school specialist music staff teach instruments hired from the Hub (although priority is given to Associates teaching First Access) and can [apply for subsidy from Wiltshire Music Connect.](#)
- *First Access e-learning* – schools can subscribe to Charanga, Sound Trap or other platforms offering music schemes of work, and receive subsidy of up to 40 per cent of the cost.

The pilots (marked with a *) have initially been available only to two schools per programme, but the programmes are being rolled out more widely from September 2017. A new programme has recently been added called Evolve, which is a composition-based approach to First Access.



Reaching more pupils, changing perceptions



It’s early days yet, as schools are currently booking programmes for September. With a deadline of early July, the uptake is not yet known, but initial indications are good. “Our numbers may be smaller than those reported by some other hubs (see table next page),” says Martin, “but they have started to increase and in a sustainable way. This year (16/17) we’re supporting 49 per cent of primaries in Wiltshire to provide First Access: last year it was significantly less at 36.5 per cent.”

Another benefit of this flexible model is that it isn’t limited by the capacity of a workforce. Instead, it allows for growth and market development. So in future, First Access figures could increase significantly – although capturing data about music participation in schools is a challenge for most hubs.

Although the subsidy for schools providing in-house First Access has also enabled better data capture, the figure may still be lower than the reality: “We’re finding out from Cluster Coordinators that some schools are delivering whole class recorders for example, but not claiming the subsidy,” he continues. “Those we know of, we include in

our figures but there may be others we don’t know about – there are some schools who we haven’t been able to reach.”

The new models are certainly helping the Hub to reach more schools, and making schools think differently about First Access. “For example, one school applied for the Associate Provider subsidy but couldn’t find a tutor – so they made an application for e-learning instead and have skilled-up their own staff,” says Martin.

The programmes are also encouraging schools to think differently about music: “We want schools to consider how music can be used more widely, for example as part of school improvement and to support learning in all areas of the curriculum, from using Djembe drums in a project about Africa, to reinforcing numeracy and literacy skills with music.”

“I’d like schools to eventually be able to report back to us on the benefits to pupil achievement, attainment and behavior,” Martin continues. “First Access isn’t just a bolt-on, it’s a holistic part of the school and its culture of learning for pupils and staff.”

Progression from first experiences to regular learning and diverse routes

One of the ways in which hubs are assessed by their main funders, Arts Council England, is how many young people progress from First Access to having tuition (‘continuation’ as

it's called). It's almost the 'holy grail' of hub outcomes, and the Cole family are an example of how this has worked:

"The group ukulele lessons that my son Elliot had very much encouraged us to pursue more lessons," says Yvonne Cole. "I thought it was fantastic that at such a young age, the children were able to learn an instrument all together. Once it finished, I discussed it with Elliot and he wanted to continue. As a parent who never learnt anything other than the recorder, I feel unqualified to say what instrument my children should go for and this was a great way of them deciding whether they liked it for themselves."

Data provided by schools in 2015-16 showed that 15 percent of those who'd taken part in the previous academic year continued to learn an instrument (other than through just doing more WCET). This figure had increased from 10% in 2014-15, although this may be due to improved data collection.

Understanding how well a hub is doing in encouraging continuation is tricky though. For one thing, it's difficult to get accurate statistics of young people taking private lessons outside of school. And these statistics don't take account of young people who go on to take other routes to continuing in music such as teaching themselves, learning from friends or siblings, or taking part in out of school clubs and activities.



Wiltshire Music Connect is particularly keen to encourage and support these routes. A consultation with young people carried out last year (called '[Take Note](#)'), found that some who wanted to progress outside of Western Classical music – for example in rock, pop, urban or even jazz – felt they weren't supported.

One example of the Hub is supporting a wider range of music-making is Evolve Music's pilot 'Sound Lab'. This is a creative music-making ensemble subsidised by the Hub. Young people aged 8-12 create and rehearse music together using whatever instruments they're learning and whatever styles they're into.



Connecting a rural county

Another recent development of the First Access model is the role of First Access Champions, one in the north of the county and one in the south, both employed for a few hours a week. Being a large rural county, one of the challenges for hub working is getting around to meet people and bring them together. "We began by appointing part-time Cluster Co-ordinators: clusters are mini Hubs that bring people together at a local level – schools, tutors, venues, organisations/societies. There are regular meetings and they arrange training and share opportunities. The next step was to appoint First Access champions specifically to support and advise individual schools, explaining what's on offer, working out what type of First Access might be suitable for their school and pupils, including financially.

First Access is leading the way in shaping a whole new approach to hub working in Wiltshire. What comes next now the foundations have been laid?

Nick Howdle, leader of the Hub, sees this as just the first step in people affected by music education being more involved and having more say in what happens in Wiltshire: "We started with wanting headteachers to take greater ownership of music and we expect to start to see that develop over the coming months and years. I'd like to think that the next step is parents, carers and young people influencing the shape of music education."

The hope is that if a parent or young person wanted a particular type of music lesson or opportunity, they would feel able to go to their school and discuss it, and the school would approach Wiltshire Music Connect to see how they could help make it happen.

"We recognised schools could take greater ownership of music and we expect to start to see that develop over the coming months and years."

Strengthening connections with the peripatetic workforce

The Associate Provider scheme is central to the new model for First Access and ensures that the connection between the important 'on the ground' workforce of 'peripatetic' musicians is not lost.

Music tutors teaching students through various schools, one-to-one or in small groups, are encouraged to become Associate Providers so that the schools can get access to subsidies for First Access and bursaries for certain pupils for one-to-one/small group tuition. In return, the tutor must provide references, complete a profile in the [Associate Directory](#) on the Wiltshire Music Connect website, have public liability insurance, safeguarding (DBS) checks, and a child protection/safeguarding policy and training.

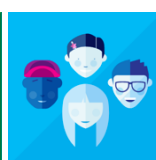
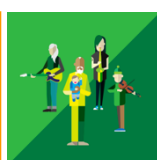
The Associate scheme has meant that a wider range of musicians is available to schools in terms of range of instruments, genres, and repertoire. The intention is to continue to grow the number and range of Associates

How the figures stack up



Type of First Access		15/16	16/17
Traditional First Access (Associate Provider) <i>Percentage this represents (of primary/junior schools in Wiltshire, total 200)</i>		65 schools 32.5%	66 schools 33%
Traditional First Access (school teacher delivering)		11 5.5%	14 7%
New models (Hit it/iPads/Ocarina/E-learning)		2 1%	26 ¹ 11%
Of which:	Hit it	n/a	2 1%
	iPads	n/a	2 1%
	Ocarinas	n/a	4 2%
	E-learning	n/a	14 7%
	Evolve new composition project	n/a	2 1%
¹ Some of these schools also provided traditional First Access			
Total known schools offering First Access			
Number of schools Percentage this represents (of infant/primary/junior schools in Wiltshire, total 200)		78 schools 39%	93 schools 46.5%²
<i>Includes schools delivering on their own, with/without subsidy, where the Hub has been made aware of them through school visits</i>			² Each school is counted only once – even if a school provides more than one type of First Access
Number and percentage of pupils this represents			
Number of pupils Percentage (of primary age pupils in Wiltshire, reception & years 1-6)		3,523 9.49%	5,898³ 15.55%
<i>Percentages calculated using numbers on roll from School Census data: 37, 124 in May 2016 and 37,921 in Jan 2017.</i>			³ This is a provisional figure calculated in June 2017 – further data is being collected so this number will increase.
NB. Even with a 2% increase in the numbers on roll in Wiltshire primary schools from 2015/16 to 2016/17, the Hub has expanded the proportion of children taking part in WCET far beyond this extra 2% in 2016/17.			
National statistics comparison:			
Primary age pupils (years 1-6) receiving WCET nationally in 2014/15		15.87%⁴	Not yet available
<i>Source: Key Data on Music Education Hubs 2015, National Foundation for Educational Research, October 2016. This figure has been calculated from figures on page 5 of the report.</i>		⁴ This national statistic is from 2014/15, as national data for 15/16 and 16/17 is not yet available. It does not include children in reception year (Wiltshire figures do).	

In addition to the figures above, two special schools took part in First Access programmes which were considered “new models” during 2016-17. This involved 40 children in one school and we estimate a similar amount in the second (numbers yet tbc).



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