

*'WHAT WOULD LIFE BE -
WITHOUT A SONG OR
A DANCE, WHAT ARE WE?'*

A SNAPSHOT REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION ON DEMENTIA AND MUSIC

UF
THE UTLEY
FOUNDATION

ILC[®]



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INTRODUCING THE COMMISSION ON DEMENTIA AND MUSIC

Music is an undeniably significant part of being human. It spans different genres, cultures and eras, and it promotes bonding, communication and wellbeing.

For many, music is part of a daily routine. Breakfast radio shows ease lots of us into our days, whilst commuters use headphones to drown out train announcements or noisy fellow passengers. Digital platforms such as Spotify compile recommended playlists to match our moods, from 'concentration' or 'motivation' to 'that Friday feeling' and 'lazy Sunday afternoons'. Perhaps winding down at the end of the day, film scores tap into our emotions and transport us out of our living rooms into different eras, different parts of the world, even different planets.

In difficult times, music can soothe, comfort and help to rebuild a sense of self. From your first nursery rhyme to the first dance at your wedding, music accompanies us throughout our lives, cements our memories and helps us to define ourselves. Music is also important at the end of our lives, bringing us together with friends and family in times of celebration and of passing.

A life without music is unimaginable for many and yet for some people with dementia, opportunities to access music can be few and far between. This is despite emerging evidence, which shows a multitude of benefits associated with music for people with dementia.

The Utley Foundation have been pioneers in championing the benefits of music-based interventions for people with dementia and, in 2017, ILC-UK was delighted to be asked on behalf of the Foundation to set up the world's first Commission on Dementia and Music. The Commission has sought to understand what music means for people with dementia, and to explore the current and potential role of music-based interventions in the prevention, treatment, care of and quality of life for people with dementia.

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission has brought together experts in the field, both by training and by experience, to try to better understand the potential of music in helping us to tackle one of the most pressing issues facing society. The Dementia 2020 challenge¹ calls on us all to help our country become the best in the world for dementia care, and for dementia research. The Commission aims to provide solutions and recommendations to help answer this call by drawing together information about the provision and value of music-based interventions.

Generating greater political and public awareness, understanding and traction for this subject, we have reviewed the current evidence base and explored the barriers to further take-up, setting out a blueprint for future work in this area. ILC-UK has acted as the secretariat of the Commission, pulling together the different strands of work with support from expert Commissioners. We are hugely grateful to all the Commissioners for their continued advice and support:

- **Chair: Baroness Sally Greengross**, cross-bench peer and Chief Executive of the International Longevity Centre - UK
- **Luciana Berger MP**, Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Liverpool, Wavertree
- **Professor Alistair Burns** FRCP, FRCPsych, MD, CBE
- **Professor Sebastian Crutch**, University College London
- **Councillor Christabel Flight**, Westminster City Council
- **Professor Martin Green** OBE FIAM, FInstLM, FRSA, FIPSM
- **Ming Hung Hsu**, Chief Music Therapist, MHA
- **Liz Jones**, Head of Policy and Research, MHA
- **Tim McLachlan**, Operations Director – Local Services, Alzheimer's Society
- **Sarah Metcalfe**, Chief Executive, Playlist for Life
- **Professor Helen Odell-Miller** OBE, Anglia Ruskin University
- **Alexia Quin**, Director, Music as Therapy International

We are also very grateful to Grace Watts, Development Director, British Association for Music Therapy and Amna Riaz, Research Assistant, ILC-UK, for their support throughout.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION SO FAR

In addressing the key questions, we draw on ideas, evidence and information from a variety of sources. We have:

- Undertaken a desk-based literature review of the evidence
- Held two 'sold-out' oral evidence sessions with subject matter experts, Commissioners and audience members in the House of Lords
- Reached out to over 6000 stakeholders, and gathered and analysed written evidence submissions from over 50 experts
- Conducted three site visits to see different types of music for people with dementia, in action
- Written a final report bringing together the findings and issuing a set of clear recommendations for future action and research.

ABOUT THIS SNAPSHOT REPORT

As noted above, this report provides a brief overview of a significantly larger report we have produced as part of the Commission. **A full version of the report can be found on the ILC-UK website at www.ilcuk.org.uk or by using this code:**



Our report examines the existing landscape and future potential of using therapeutic music with people with dementia, which forms one of the most pressing health concerns of our time. Adopting a holistic approach, the report is unique in providing an overview of current music-based provision for people with dementia, the scope of this provision and the associated evidence base.

The report argues that this is a fragmented and largely informal area of delivery, and adds considerable value by joining together a wide range of intervention styles to help understand the implications of this work at a national level. We have designed a set of actionable recommendations with the ambition of taking this work forwards.

Ultimately, the report shows that music can provide a true lifeline for those both with and without dementia by promoting social connection, restoring a sense of self and bringing joy even in the most challenging of times. The ability to connect to music is an innate aspect of being human; having a diagnosis of dementia need not undermine this.

We believe that everyone has a right to meaningful music and that too many people with dementia are living a life in silence. We want to help bring people back into the present moment, using music as a tool to achieve this.



The very first time I put the headphones on she said: 'thank you for the music'.

Daughter of a person with dementia, quote provided by Playlist for Life



THE CASE FOR CHANGE

There are **currently 850,000** people **with dementia** in the UK



Numbers are set to **rise to 1 million by 2025** and **2 million by 2051**²



2017
£26.3bn

2047
£50bn +

UK
DEMENTIA
COST

The **annual cost** of **dementia** to the **UK** is **£26.3bn**. This is expected to **exceed £50bn** over the **next 3 decades**³.

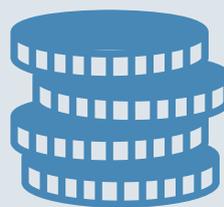
To **compare**, planned **spending for the Department of Health** in England alone for **2017/18** is **approximately £123.8 billion** in real terms



DEMENTIA
£11.9bn

CANCER/STROKE/HEART
£10.4bn

Dementia has higher health and social care costs (£11.9bn) than **cancer** (£5.0bn), **stroke** (£2.9bn) and **chronic heart disease** (£2.5bn) **combined**⁴

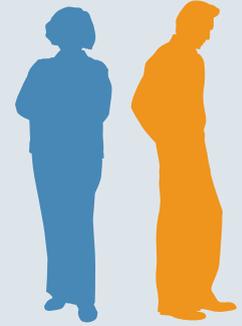


2020 - 2035
£100bn
IN POTENTIAL
COST SAVINGS

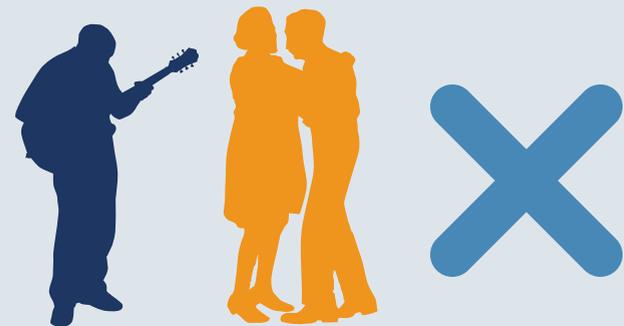
Considerable **savings** could be **made** if the **onset of dementia** could be **delayed**. Looking at Alzheimer's alone, if we could delay the **onset by 5 years** then it is **estimated** that **£100bn** could be saved **between 2020** and **2035**⁵



Neuropsychiatric symptoms of dementia such as **agitation, depression, apathy and anxiety** are reported to **affect approximately 80% of people** with dementia living in care homes⁶



Evidence estimates suggest that **high quality arts and music provision** may currently only be available in **just 5% of care homes**⁷



There may be as many as **320,000 people with dementia** in **residential settings** who **do not have access to meaningful arts provision**

Around 566,700 people with **dementia live in the community** and it is **not currently known** how many of these people are able to **access music-based interventions**



WHY MUSIC MATTERS - THE KNOWN BENEFITS

A review of existing evidence supports what is often said anecdotally: music offers a potential lifeline for people with dementia, their carers and loved ones, one which can sometimes be unmatched by other interventions. For example, the Commission received an evidence submission from a spouse caring for her 62-year-old husband who is living with dementia. In this submission, she says that

‘Music is now the one thing I can share with my husband that seems to give him pleasure’.

In another submission, the wife of a man living with frontotemporal dementia says that

‘...[music] can bring a smile when other attempts at communication fail, and can bring use of language, i.e. singing, when normal speech fails’.

Emerging academic evidence is beginning to support this wealth of anecdotal evidence. In the full report, we explore in depth the evidence base and weight of evidence for each of the known benefits of music-based interventions for people with dementia. Below, however, is a topline summary of just some of the benefits:

- **Music and the brain:** Regions of the brain associated with musical memory may overlap with regions relatively spared in Alzheimer’s disease. Meanwhile, music is multi-dimensional and underpinned by widespread cortical plasticity, suggesting that even if certain areas of the brain are badly affected by dementia, a person may still be able to understand and enjoy music. Music may help in the recall of information for people with dementia, similar to mnemonics, and playing a musical instrument may

be associated with a lowered likelihood of developing dementia.

- **Minimising the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD):** Music-based interventions have the potential to help minimise BPSD, including agitation, abnormal vocalisation and aggression.
- **Tackling anxiety and depression:** Music-based interventions can help to reduce anxiety and depression amongst people with dementia. Some research has suggested that the impact of music therapy on anxiety and depression could potentially be lasting, but more evidence is required.
- **Retaining speech and language:** Music-based interventions may have the potential to improve the retention of speech and language for people with dementia.
- **Enhancing quality of life:** Research suggests that music-based interventions can help to facilitate increased social interaction or ‘flow’, improve well-being, decrease stress hormones and enhance the quality of life of people with dementia.
- **Impact on caregivers:** Early-stage research indicates that improvements in caregiving after music-related training are reported by caregivers, families, service providers and music therapists. Feedback suggests that engaging carers in music-based interventions can help them to better understand residents. Further research is needed to help demonstrate behaviour change of carers and statistical significance of changes.
- **Palliative and end of life care:** Qualitative evidence suggests that music therapy in end of life care may help to minimise anxiety and discomfort.

THE DEMENTIA AND MUSIC ECOSYSTEM

What do we mean by ‘music-based interventions’, and what sort of activities are taking place?

Across the UK, there is a dedicated and passionate community of individuals and organisations who are delivering music-based interventions for people with dementia and their carers. We use the term ‘music-based interventions’ throughout to refer to a very broad range of activity and approaches, both formal and informal.

In the main report, we analysed the level of provision and reach of activities across the UK, but below is a snapshot of just some of the actors and activities currently taking place:

1. Listening to music can provide a valuable source of enjoyment, entertainment and therapy for people with dementia. It can provide a relatively cheap and simple way for individuals to enjoy music, and can allow friends and family to share quality time with them. In addition to some of the specific interventions outlined below, simply listening to the radio or to a CD can provide a valuable opportunity for people with dementia to listen to music.

2. Personalised, recorded music is a growing area of delivery in the UK. Charities such as Playlist for Life encourage carers and loved ones, as well as people with dementia, to compile lists of digital music which are particularly significant to the individual. Playlists can provide a source of comfort and enjoyment for individuals and help to ensure that music-listening is person-centred. In thinking about designing playlists for people with dementia, evidence suggests that there is a ‘memory bump’ for music. It appears that people with dementia retain clearest memories for music they enjoyed and heard between roughly the ages of 10 and 30⁸.

3. Learning and playing an instrument, evidence suggests, might help to prevent the onset of dementia. A study⁹ of twins in California, whilst unable to provide conclusive evidence, suggests that music may be a modifiable protective factor against dementia and cognitive impairment.

4. Live music in care homes is delivered by a multitude of different individuals and organisations across the UK. Some charities, for example Music in Hospitals and Care (MiHC), Live Music Now (LMN), Lost Chord and Musical Moments bring professionally qualified musicians into the care home setting to perform and engage with residents.

Another example is the work of Beatie Wolfe, a singer-songwriter who began looking at the therapeutic power of music for people with dementia in 2014, with support from The Utley Foundation. The partnership looked at direct, ground-level impact through working with residents in care homes as well as broader, awareness raising initiatives like the Music and Dementia Festival, held in August 2017.

5. Music therapy refers to a distinct profession regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), with clear Standards of Proficiency (SOPs)¹⁰ and Standards of Education and Training (SETs)¹¹. Music therapists hold a postgraduate clinical qualification, as well as a degree in music (or equivalent); they will also have achieved Grade 8 or equivalent, in at least one instrument. It can be accessed through statutory services

(NHS, local authority and social care services), charities, third sector provision, social enterprises, or privately in people’s homes. As an example, MHA, a large national charity for older people, runs an innovative and leading music therapy service for people with moderate to severe dementia in its dementia care homes.

Music therapy, as distinct from the above-mentioned work, focusses on therapeutic goals. It may be delivered one-to-one or in a group setting. People with dementia who are engaged in music therapy will be involved in the creation of music themselves, and the music is often improvised by both therapist and individual. The role also involves advising other health and care colleagues, training musicians and therapists from other disciplines and advising on an individual’s general care. The British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)¹² is the key professional body operating in this field.

6. Community-based musical performances and events are delivered by many charitable organisations around the UK. These tend to be offered to people with dementia in the community, and their carers and loved ones. Examples of this kind of provision include the collaboration between Wigmore Hall, Westminster Arts and the Royal Academy of Music, delivering a project called Music for the Moment. This project organises and delivers periodic performances by students at the Royal Academy of Music for people with dementia and their carers and loved ones, as observed during a Commission site visit.

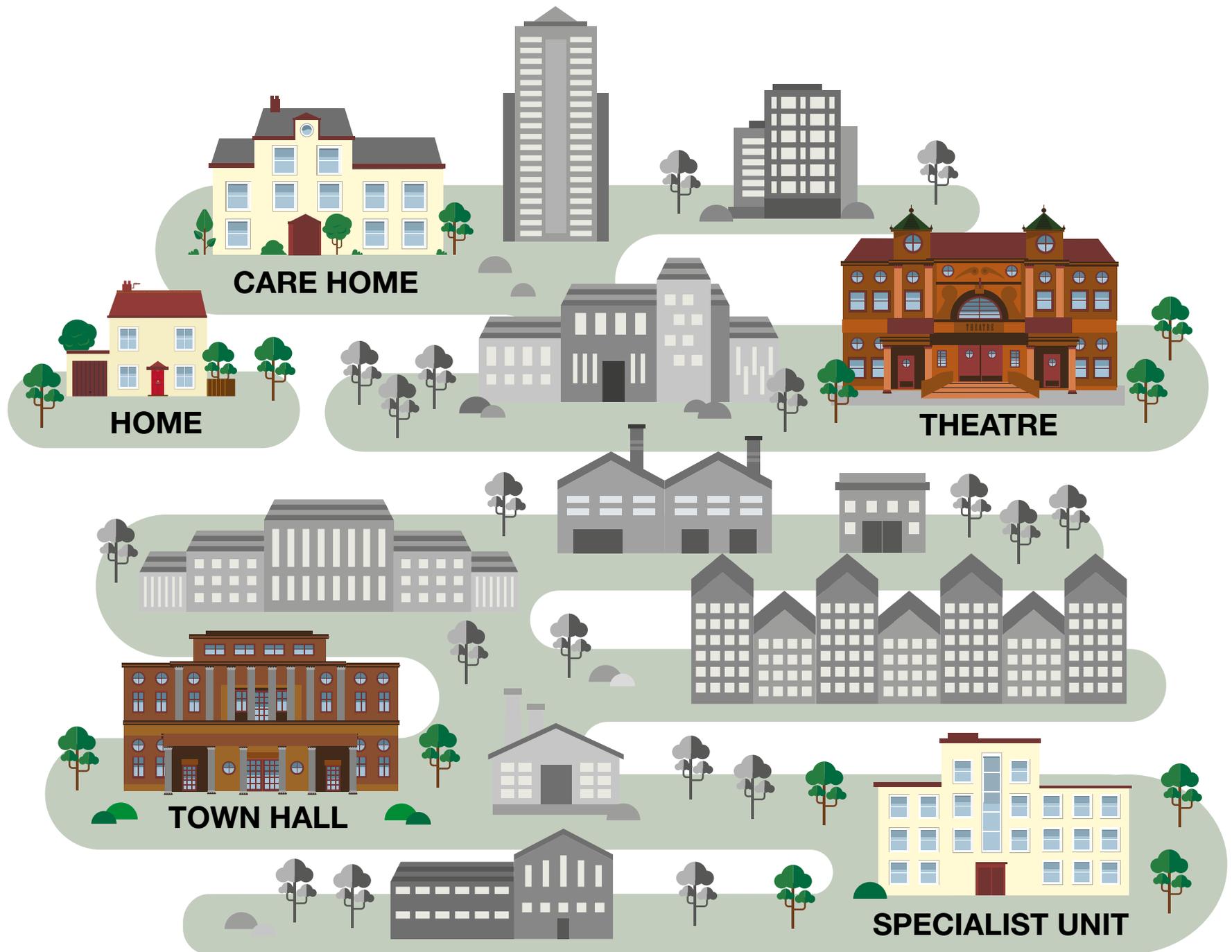
7. Community-based music groups: Some of the best-known examples of music for people with dementia fall under this bracket, perhaps most notably the Alzheimer’s Society’s 300 Singing for the Brain™ groups which are available across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, responses to the Commission’s call for written evidence unveiled a very wide range of community-based activity, being delivered by many different organisations and ranging considerably in scale and scope, as discussed in our full report.

Music is now the one thing I can share with my husband that seems to give him pleasure.

Written evidence submission from a carer

THE UK'S DEMENTIA AND MUSIC ECOSYSTEM

In the full report, we explore in further depth the dementia and music ecosystem, using illustrations to help exemplify the range of activities, interventions and opportunities in the field. The below illustration demonstrates that music can be provided and enjoyed in a range of locations and can be used to support people throughout their journey with dementia.



CONCLUSIONS

Our report draws several conclusions about the field of music and dementia, highlighted below:

- The field is currently characterised by **devoted advocates operating in a complex and poorly coordinated ecosystem**. The dementia and music environment is supported by a dedicated network of individuals and organisations, looking to grow the sector and keen for pragmatic options and recommendations to take this field of work forwards. We need to improve local information and data collection to ensure that both the public and professionals have everything they need to ensure that music reaches people with dementia.
- **The field is defined by sporadic provision which is currently delivered only to the few**. Educated estimates suggest that very few people currently receive the full range of music options and support. This is likely due to multiple reasons, including a lack of public understanding about the benefits of music, the high cost (or perceived high cost) of some types of intervention and the lack of a centralised overview of current provision. Furthermore, it is difficult to know how many people with dementia currently have access to music, largely due to a lack of data. We want to see provision reaching all people with dementia, including the most vulnerable individuals who may not have family or friends to speak on their behalf.
- Fortunately, **the sector is supported by a promising evidence base which is quickly gaining traction**. A growing research base, spanning some twenty to thirty years, is beginning to demonstrate the range of benefits of music for people with dementia. Whilst there are areas in which the evidence can be improved and strengthened (as outlined in the full report), there is much to be celebrated in the existing literature, which shows that music can promote a range of hugely beneficial outcomes for people with dementia. Moreover, when used appropriately and in a meaningful way, the use of music has no known negative impacts.
- The sector would greatly benefit from **increased funding**. Further developing **cost-effectiveness research** would be a critical factor in boosting recognition and funding. Statutory budgets, both of central and local governments, are currently tightly restricted and are likely to continue to be closely monitored in the coming years. This is combined with health and social care pressures associated with an ageing population. In this light, those dedicated to dementia and music need first-and-foremost to focus on providing convincing cost-effectiveness evidence in order to be granted funding. Meanwhile, private sector and philanthropic organisations should recognise the importance and value of this field of work, and utilise their own resources and expertise to help grasp some of the opportunities available.
- **We need to raise public awareness** in order to maximise the potential of this field of work. As yet, the range of benefits that music can offer people with dementia appears to have not yet reached the general public. The value of music for people with dementia should be more clearly expressed in public-facing literature and a large-scale PR campaign would be highly valuable in raising awareness, winning over hearts-and-minds and ensuring an increased demand.

I would be singing, saying, (sings) ‘We’re going to get you washed, here we go today’ and then I’d start into a song, using their name. So it’s like a communication that you never knew you had.

Written evidence submission from a carer

WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

This snapshot report highlights the compelling case for music-based interventions for people with dementia and their carers; our full report discusses this evidence in further detail.

The benefits of music for people with dementia are clear and yet why is it that so many people with dementia are not accessing appropriate music-based interventions? At the heart of this debate is the right for people with dementia to have not just a life, but a good life and to be comforted and enlivened by the power of music.

As a Commission, we do not accept this current status quo and this report is merely the start of an ambitious and tenacious journey to ensure and enable the right for all to access music. Music is not simply a ‘nice add on’, it has tangible, evidence-based benefits and reaches out beyond the home to the care sector, hospitals, hospices and across into the wider community.

In order to achieve the goal of delivering meaningful music for all, this report makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Ask	Associated stakeholder(s)
Coordinate delivery and build intelligence	An independent, non-political, high profile Ambassador for Dementia and Music needs to emerge as a leader in the field. Utilising a substantial budget, sourced from a mix of charitable, philanthropic and private funding, the Ambassador should lead a dedicated task force to deliver transformational change in music access for people with dementia and their carers. With an ambitious campaigning agenda to ensure the effective co-ordination of national and regional activities, co-opting the efforts of the music industry with the arts sector and new technologies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ambassador and task force should be able to speak for and to all strands of work across all sectors • The Ambassador and task force should work with various sectors, to ensure universal access to music for people with dementia, for example free or subsidised music downloads for people with dementia 	Music and dementia sector
	We need clearer local offers of activities and interventions for people with dementia, including in residential settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include music-based interventions • To follow a consistent format between local areas 	Local authorities
	We need a national framework to collate information from local offers, generated into a centralised database summarising local provision for people with dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should include music-based provision • Data should be made publicly-available 	Local Government Association
	In the meantime, all providers of music-based interventions should register their provision through the Alzheimer’s Society’s Dementia Connect tool	Music and dementia sector
	The dementia and music sector should work to coordinate, unifying and further develop tool kits and training guides to enable new practitioners to develop necessary skills. The resources should reflect and draw together best practice from a range of existing programmes, thereby acting as conclusive guides. Endorsement should be sought from recognised bodies (e.g. NHS England, CQC, Skills for Care, Skills for Health)	Music and dementia sector

Develop the research base	NICE's upcoming review of the dementia care guidelines (2018) is imminent. It will not be feasible for researchers to produce a wealth of new evidence ahead of this review. Instead, researchers should focus efforts on proving the cost-effectiveness of music-based interventions. This will be crucial in the ongoing development of the field	Academics Music and dementia sector
	Other important areas in which to develop the research base are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to propose new research studies, using randomised control trials wherever practical and feasible Clearly voice the challenges inherent in undertaking RCTs with target cohorts, and propose studies which best suit the interventions in question, be that mixed-methods, non-randomised, qualitative etc 	Academics Music and dementia sector
	Meanwhile, we encourage NICE evidence reviewers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question the burden of proof, both considering challenges and feasibility of RCTs with target cohorts and the inherent costs involved in such studies Value the existing research base and reflect this in the new dementia care guidelines Continue to provide constructive advice to researchers in this field about building good-quality evidence in this sector 	Non-departmental public bodies (NICE)
Raise public awareness	All relevant organisations must ensure that public-facing advice and guidance clearly highlights the value of music for people with dementia	Central and local government Health & social care sector Government Voluntary organisations Care homes Arts organisations The music industry Any/all other relevant organisations
	A national campaign should be launched to recognise the value of music for people with dementia, capitalising on recent media attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging, approachable and informative mass media Utilising varied platforms (e.g. television, social media, radio, public events, performances, festivals) 	Voluntary organisations Care homes Professional bodies Philanthropic trusts and foundations The music industry Arts organisations Lobbyists Think tanks Health & social care sector Government Parliament Celebrities and high-profile figures Academics Music and arts festivals (e.g. the Proms, Glastonbury) Any/all other relevant organisations

Coordinate and grow funding	Philanthropic trusts and private sector organisations should leverage their collective networks and funding to pioneer work in this area; this topic provides an opportunity for philanthropists to make a tangible difference and develop new schemes of work	Philanthropic trusts and foundations Private sector organisations
	We propose the roll-out of integrated personal budgets to people with dementia	NHS
	We call for the recognition and promotion of music for people with dementia, including through personal health budgets and integrated personal budgets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The therapeutic potential of music should be specifically recognised 	NHS CCGs Local authorities
	Service commissioners must take music-based interventions for people with dementia seriously when planning both preventative and dementia care services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should be reflected in funding allocations 	Local authorities CCGs
	Where directly funding provision is not possible or practical, we call on statutory services to play a role in better coordinating and supporting work in this sector, in order to support delivery by others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would include liaising with the proposed task force on dementia and music 	Statutory services Voluntary sector
Make the best use of technology	We need a consensus on the clear potential of digital interventions in this field and a celebration of their unique value, alongside the benefits brought by other forms of music-based interventions	Music and dementia sector
	Given the relative affordability of digital interventions, we want all people with dementia to be able to access interventions such as (but not limited to) Playlist for Life by 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It currently costs £250 in year one and £120 in subsequent years to provide a person with dementia with limitless music, through providing hardware and access to Playlist for Life and Spotify services. If music publishers and streaming platforms could make music available for free or at a reduced price for people with dementia, this could help to considerably lessen the price and make music available for all 	Music and dementia sector Music industry
	We call for ongoing creativity in deciding how technology can support dementia and music. Urging engaged organisations and individuals to explore the value which can be derived from new and emerging technologies e.g. virtual reality and artificial intelligence	Music and dementia sector Technology companies of all scales Music industry
	We want the dementia and music sector to build strong and mutually beneficial relationships with major technology companies and start-ups	Music and dementia sector Technology companies of all scales The music industry Philanthropic trusts and foundations
Support individuals to find the right intervention at the right time	We want the proposed task force on dementia and music to create and roll-out a clear, public-facing tool or 'roadmap' designed to help explain which interventions might be more suitable for a person with dementia as the disease progresses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should be informed by the evidence base but easily understood by non-expert audiences It should include, where possible, different strands and emphases depending on variables such as type of dementia, age, ethnicity, comorbidities etc 	Music and dementia sector Think tanks Academics Philanthropic trusts and foundations

DEMENTIA AND MUSIC IN ACTION

Across the course of this project, we have spoken with and met a broad range of actors working in the field of dementia and music. In the full report, we have captured their typical working day, but below, we have included a snapshot of just some of their remarkable stories:



Live Music Now with Fred

Live Music Now with Fred from an Arts Council England-funded project called New Age Music delivered Live Music Now (LMN) in partnership with The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) and Creative Inspiration CIC

“Fred was saying that he had not played keyboard for years and that he didn’t feel he would be able to now. As Fred relaxed, he began to respond with his great sense of humour to the music. He would respond to the end of songs with his “trademark hook”; “dum dum de dum dum, dum dum”.... When his daughter witnessed him playing the keyboard again, she was moved to tears of joy!”



The Utley Foundation and Beatie Wolfe

The Utley Foundation and Beatie Wolfe began looking at the therapeutic power of music for dementia patients in 2014. The partnership observed ground-level impact working in care homes as well as broader, awareness raising initiatives like the Music and Dementia Festival, held in August 2017.

“David’s family had stopped visiting because it was too difficult to see him inert and out of it. The carers were hopeful that the music would produce some sign of engagement that they could share with David’s family to say, “he’s still here”. Before the music began nothing could rouse David, then within the first few bars of the first song, David’s arm started to move in perfect time to the music. Then his eyes widened. Later in the set he got up and he danced.”



Demelza Stafford, Music in Hospitals and Care

Demelza Stafford, Music in Hospitals and Care (Demelza works as a freelance opera singer performing roles and concerts and for more than ten years has also sung therapeutic concerts for Music in Hospitals & Care.)

‘As we perform, we see reactions from visitors and carers too, often completely overwhelmed at seeing loved ones interact in ways they haven’t for months, years even. Carers are often moved to tears when residents who can’t usually engage or speak, manage to sing every word, tap a toe or even find their way to their feet to dance.’



Iain Spink

Iain Spink (music therapist, Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust)

‘The majority of the patients are in receipt of NHS “continuing care” and are long term residents. As a therapist, this provides opportunities for long term work and the capacity for meaningful therapeutic relationships. I have worked at the unit for nine years and there is one lady who has regularly attended my sessions throughout this time, including a prior stay on a different hospital ward. I recently spoke with two of her daughters and we reflected on the benefits of music therapy for their mother and how this has provided her with an additional strand of continuity within her care over the years. Music has always been a big part of her life.’



Jodie Webber

Jodie Webber, MHA (Jodie is a music therapist at MHA, a charity that provides specialist dementia care across the UK)

‘Throughout sessions I am looking for specific aspects of the residents’ presentation, including engagement, levels of stimulation and changes in mood. I am also considering how the residents may be using their remaining cognitive abilities, such as attention and memory. It is important to highlight these abilities, which may not be observable outside of music therapy sessions, and utilise this information in residents’ day-to-day lives.’



Paula Bain, Playlist for Life

Paula Bain, Playlist for Life (Paula is a Training Officer with Playlist for Life, a charity that helps people with dementia, their families and carers to use personal playlists, often on iPods or mp3s, and harness the benefits of music in their lives on a daily basis)

‘Last week, a carer told us of a woman who was completely ‘locked in’ – she wouldn’t speak and rarely came out of her room. Her son had stopped visiting because he found it so distressing. The home contacted the son as part of the Music Detective process and he said his mum used to sing 10 Green Bottles when they were out in the car. So later the carer started to sing 10 Green Bottles and the woman instantly opened her eyes and began singing. Then they showed us a film of the woman listening to her playlist – Memory from Cats was playing. She was alert and engaged, stroking the carer’s face. And the son had started visiting again because they would listen together. It was amazing.’

ENDNOTES

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[Music] can bring a smile when other attempts at communication fail, and can bring use of language, i.e. singing, when normal speech fails.

Wife of a man living with frontotemporal dementia



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