

# NINA CLARK

## Music & Wellbeing Practitioner



### Evolving a Creative Practice

Since 2015, Nina Clark has been developing her role as a Music & Wellbeing Practitioner, evolving her skills as a professional musician, instrument tutor, workshop leader, creative consultant, staff training provider and musical activist to become more inclusive. Her goal is to engage people living with a dementia and people in varied caregiving roles and galvanise the care sector to cultivate a new culture promoting the actions and ethos of music for wellbeing.

As Founder of community interest company [Musical Walkabout](#), Nina built upon successful early Arts Council England funding, expanding her client base and services, providing person-centred music engagement in care homes, day centres, hospitals and dementia cafes around Kent.

These activities have led to a specialism in creative provision of music and wellbeing activities, workshops and programmes, co-curated with and for people living with a dementia, an area of keen interest to Nina, whose maternal grandmother passed her final years living with vascular dementia.

Academic studies over several decades of research on the topic of music, dementia and wellbeing have garnered much traction in communities across the globe, and are widely

discussed in the media. Yet there is still inadequate funding or connected provision within the care sector, with many people still experiencing a lack of provision of vital music and wellbeing services.

Nina is dedicated to Musical Walkabout's ongoing commitment to an evolving best practice, and regularly consults with service providers such as the NHS and local councils and dementia related organisations. Musical Walkabout continues to champion opportunities for Nina and fellow practitioners to develop and lead interventions which promote creative leadership and training which empowers care sector management and staff with creative care skills.

## Activities - 2017-2022



**Musical Walkabout CIC** have provided weekly and monthly 1-2-1 minstrelling sessions at care homes, hospitals, day centres and healthcare workshops around Kent and the South East for 8 years. Nina has personally sung over 6000 songs with older residents, patients and participants, many of whom live with a dementia, co-curating bespoke musical journeys spanning many years with over 600 inspiring individuals from our elder communities.

Since 2017, Nina has collaborated with Dr Ann Skingley, former Principal Research Fellow at [Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health](#). This formative working relationship

has seen Dr Skingley independently [evaluating Musical Walkabout's projects and impacts](#) as well as developing a network with Mu NHS EKHUFT.

As the founder and Inclusive Music Practitioner of Musical Walkabout, Nina has delivered services, projects, workshops, courses, presentations, webinars, public speaking engagements and events for Arts Council England, NHS, Kent County Council, South East Care Home Education Program, The Utley Foundation, The Alzheimer's Show, Kent Dementia Showcase, No Place Like Home, Care Home Expo UK, Dementia Pathways, the United Nations and presented an expert witness knowledge transfer to The House of Lords.

## Songsters

At the invitation of Dr Yvette Kusel, Nina provided consultancy with **Shepway Community Mental Health Service for Older People**, discovering that Shepway has a higher than usual instance of Young Onset Dementia but was lacking provision, particularly regarding music and wellbeing.



In May 2019 Musical Walkabout launched [Songsters](#) a community singing group for people with young onset dementia, their family and associated staff in the health and social care sector. Originally hosted at Broadmeadow Care Centre, this inclusive participatory session has now grown to host over 60 participants in four locations around Kent, including Hythe Dementia Awareness Forum and is proud to have been funded by Folkestone Town Council, SAGA, Kent County Council and public donations.

The Songsters celebrated 2023's carer's Thank You Day by recording and releasing a version of 'Thank You For Being A Friend' with The Gleeman, endorsed by Tony Christie.

## Music Helps

Staff training and empowerment in 'music for wellbeing' is vital to the ongoing sustainability of our perilously overstretched health and social care sector. Since 2019, with the support of Arts Council England, local councillors and the Kent Community Foundation, Nina has staff training model called [Music Helps](#).



In 2021 Musical Walkabout delivered a 24 week program of Music Helps, co-curated with NHS professionals, who helped Nina develop a model of achievable creative care plans. From 2023, Music Helps is now available as a national training and development scheme, accessible both online and in person.

Funding to support such training and consultancy is necessary to build a greater variety of creative opportunities for our communities; the development of more practitioners, enabling volunteers, care staff and people living with dementia to curate and lead their own musical interventions, in an inclusive and accessible way.

To promote the actions and ethos of this mission, Musical Walkabout launched a podcast of [Music Helps](#) in 2023, inviting a wide variety of guests, many impacted by dementia, to share their thoughts and experiences of ways that music supports their wellbeing, and inspire the general public to get involved in this form of musical activism.

## Social Change

Musical Walkabout is committed to lobbying for legislative change around inadequate care sector budgets for music; currently considered 'entertainment', these interventions are known to be therapeutic, cathartic and have proven health and wellbeing benefits, complimenting pharmaceutical 'solutions'. **As such, music provision should be accessed and paid for with contributions from medical/pharmaceutical budgets; an action which requires the full weight of parliamentary legislature.**

## Get in touch!

Nina and Musical Walkabout thrive in participation and collaboration. If you would like to engage her services as a music practitioner, trainer or consultant, or have questions about what provision is available to you, get in touch and start a conversation.

Please visit [www.musicalwalkabout.com](http://www.musicalwalkabout.com) or [LinkedIn](#), [Youtube](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) to learn more about Musical Walkabout's resources and services.

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