

# A guide for social workers on how to embed music in social care plans for people living with dementia.

**This guide for social workers provides information on how to assess music needs and embed music-based activities in personalised social care plans for people living with dementia.**

We use 'music-based activities' in this guide to describe the wide variety of music on offer which includes many types of activities such as singing or listening to music in the home, developing a playlist of favourite songs or music, watching musicals, singing in a physical or virtual choir or group, singing and dancing or walking to music, singing along with a musician, and specialist music therapy.

## 1 The benefits of music for people living with dementia

*Music is a universal experience that people living with dementia can enjoy and experience at any time and throughout their journey with dementia. There are many potential physical, psychosocial and social benefits of music-based activities for people living with dementia. Music is not just a nicety within a person's care plan but has a useful role to play in prevention, diagnosis and care.*

## 2 Include music in care conversations

*In the conversations you have with people about their care, include the subject of music by asking about what music is important to them, and how and when they like to experience it. Try to think holistically with the person about who they are, what matters to them, and the ways in which music might be woven through their life.*

*There are many areas in someone's life where music might have played an important role e.g. through their love of sport, their faith or spiritual life, their work, their relationships with family and friends.*

*Have more than one conversation, keep a record of preferences, involve carers and family members, and listen out for clues about what does and doesn't work for people. See our [Musical Guide](#) for ideas of how to include music in care.*

## 3 Use our template to support your conversations

*Use and adapt our template to be a routine part of your care conversations for developing care plans. You will find the template as an appendix in the [full guide](#).*

## 4 Music in social care plans

*We would encourage that an individual's musical preferences are listed high up in their care plans, alongside other key information about their needs and wishes.*

## 5 Family and friends supporting the plan

*Family and friends can play a key role in supporting the musical elements of a person's care plan or a music social prescription (even if they are not living with them) – involve them in the planning and conversations – you'll find they'll want to be part of the plans.*

## 6 Linking with local opportunities for music-based activities

*The Music for Dementia [Musical Map](#) has information about the location of different types of music-based activities that are available across the country.*

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