

OPUS Music CIC (OPUS) is a Community Interest Company specialising in the use of music within health and social care, for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of patients, carers and health/care professionals. We were created as a constituted, non profit-making organisation in 2000, established a specialism within Music in Healthcare practice in 2010, and became a Community Interest Company in 2012.

Our vision: Music as an intrinsic part of health and social care, everywhere.

Our mission: To champion the use of music to connect and transform the lives of all people within health and social care.

We work to create a culture where music within health and social care is embraced, and its value to the health and wellbeing of all people within these spaces is routinely recognised and promoted.

We are dedicated to gaining an increased understanding of, and working to remove, barriers for people and organisations to engage with music as a means to improved health and wellbeing.

The organisation is comprised of a growing, highly talented and experienced team of professional Healthcare Musicians and Trainers, managed by its Chief Executive, and governed by a dedicated group of Board Directors, including leaders from the Arts, Health and Education sectors.

We form the hub of a network of high-quality, creative, socially-engaged practice, formed largely through its training, apprenticeship, mentoring and advocacy programmes. We are viewed both nationally, and internationally, as a UK leader in the delivery and development of this work.

OPUS became a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) with Arts Council England (ACE) in April 2023, supporting the core development of OPUS and its strands of work.



Our current practice

Our practice is born from European partnerships, led by the inspirational Musique & Santé in France. This ground-breaking European Commission funded partnership, leading to a transfer of innovation to OPUS, is inspired by the French governmental agreement which declares a patient's fundamental right of access to culture as part of their healthcare journey.

This right to music as part of a person's wellbeing drives our vision, mission and values, and guides our cultural approach to health and wellbeing, the resulting practice of which has seen great success over the past thirteen years:

"A long-standing patient has got great comfort from the music and singing. The patient who has dementia usually gives no eye contact and will just shout out and screw up her face. Today this patient has her eyes open, the most beautiful smile and is humming along to the music. We need more of this on the wards. Seeing the positive response by patients has brought a tear to my eye."

Nurse



Our ethos is based upon the fundamental principle that live music and interactive music-making is a valuable cultural activity which brings points of connection and therapeutic benefit to those who engage with it. Everyone has a role to play in the music-making process, and all contributions are valued in the co-creation of musical interventions.

Our team of Healthcare Musicians are highly-skilled in inspiring, motivating and enabling people to become creative musicians in these moments, providing opportunities for them to express their own diverse identities and experiences through music-making, and to share this with the health/care communities in which they are present.

“There was a deaf lady who we noticed was interested in what we were doing. We gave her a stick shaker and although she couldn’t hear, she could pick the beat up from watching, she enjoyed it so much it made her cry, she was really into the music and she couldn’t wait to tell her family.”

Music Care Trainee

Our highly respected and internationally acclaimed work includes:

- High quality music in healthcare delivery, principally within acute care at patient’s bedside with patients from birth to end of life.
- Training, mentoring and apprenticeship programmes for musicians, leading to the development of this work across the UK and beyond.
- ‘Music Care’ training for healthcare professionals on the use of music within their own scopes of practice in partnership with Canadian organisation Room 217 Foundation.
- Supporting a network of practice, facilitating conferences and symposia with international representation.



Over the past 13 years, we have led the way in delivering practice for children and young people and their families within maternity and Neonatal Intensive Care Units, Children's High Dependency and Critical Care Units, Children's General and Specialist Wards and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Services.

In addition, we deliver practice within adult mental health wards, specialist stroke and dementia wards and in residential and day care settings.

Our commitment to ongoing evaluation and research, to dialogue with health/care colleagues, and deep reflection upon practice has informed music-making within health and social care spaces, including approaches to creative music-making with patients which lead to (amongst many other things):

- Increased autonomy
- Increased agency/self-efficacy
- Supporting emotional regulation
- Increased social engagement
- Increased social inclusion
- Strengthened sense of identity



These traits inherent in our practice and their importance are reinforced by findings in reports such as the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Wellbeing's 'Creative Health' report ([click image for link](#)),



UK Music/Music for Dementia's 'Power of Music' report ([click image for link](#)),



the World Health Organisations scoping review on the role of the Arts in improving health and wellbeing ([click image for link](#)),



and the 'Active Ingredients' of Arts and Health activities identified by Wellcome ([click image for link](#)).

We deliver high-quality training, reaching over 200 professional and community musicians over the past 13 years both in-person, and online. Apprenticeship and mentoring programmes funded by Arts Council England, and delivered by OPUS have led to new organisations and practitioners emerging across the UK and beyond, from settings such as Great Ormond Street and Alder Hey Children's Hospitals, to older people's wards and care settings across Nottingham/shire to rural hospitals in New South Wales, Australia. Of 12 Apprenticeships delivered, 11 Alumni continue to deliver sustained practice across the UK, gaining significant support from ACE.

"I found the 5-day training course truly inspirational, but it was the year-long apprenticeship that made a big difference for me. Working with OPUS enabled me to develop the musical, personal and professional skills I needed to become a Musician in Healthcare, and supported me and my fellow Apprentice to establish our new organisation. We are now working in five different hospitals with both children and older people, with more plans in the pipeline. There have been some magical moments, beautiful music and a lot of emotions ... I didn't imagine when I first came along 5 years ago that I'd be where I am today, and I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing!"

Apprenticeship Alumni

In partnership with Room 217 Foundation in Canada, we deliver rigorously researched and tested training for health and care professionals, supporting their use of music and music-making within their care practices. This training was piloted in the UK by OPUS in partnership with Nottingham University, and is currently being delivered to health and care professionals via Trust-led CPD programmes.

"There was a lady who hadn't wanted to have a dressing taken off a wound. She'd refused for two or three days, wouldn't let anyone near it. I was playing music and said, come on, shut your eyes and listen to the music, and before she knew it, the nurse had removed the dressing. A while later, the nurse said, 'I've got to take a canula out, the person's been refusing for days – can you do the same with them?' And the same happened. The nurse said, 'I wish we'd done this before!'"

Music Care Alumni



Our developing practice

Alongside our established practice within acute healthcare, we are developing new programmes of activity within community settings within the East Midlands. During 2023-24, we will be piloting programmes within three regions (Ashfield, Bolsover, Nottingham), co-creating improved health and wellbeing outcomes alongside patients and Social Prescribing Link Workers through music-making activity.

This will include:

- Engaging with musicians within the three regions of the East Midlands, working with them to support the development of their own Music in Health/care practices, building increased relevance and sustainability of activity.
- Delivering regular community-based music-making activity in the three regions, focussing particularly on people living with poor mental health.
- Continuing to develop our Health/care Musician practice and our training offers for both musicians and health/care professionals.
- Working closely with the health/care systems to develop increased integration of this work within the integrated systems of health and social care.

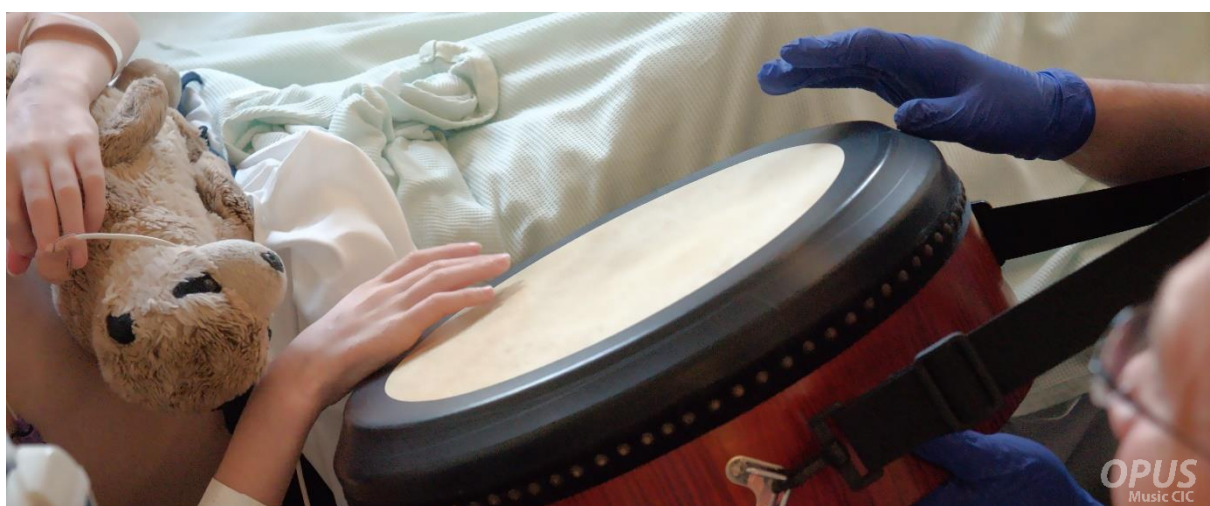
Other future plans include research, alongside the University of Nottingham, of the role of music for improved health and wellbeing within South Asian communities. We are deeply and passionately committed to supporting the development of a more diverse workforce for Music in Health/care practice.

We also plan to continue hosting mutually beneficial placements for students from the University of Sheffield's Medical School, influencing the next generation of medical professionals.

We are focussed on building increased capacity within our administrative team to deliver our mission, and to support our current programme and future ambitions. We are also looking to engage additional board members who bring new skills, perspectives and experiences to guide and support our work.



We are engaged with many stakeholders in this arena, including the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, the National Academy for Social Prescribing, the National Centre for Creative Health, NHS and Health Education England amongst others. We have delivered 4 national in-person conferences engaging with over 200 stakeholders across the UK, as well as playing an organising/hosting role alongside Nottingham University's Institute for Mental Health, Room 217 Foundation and Music for Dementia, amongst others, in the delivery of international in-person and online music and health conferences.



We work in partnership with local, regional, national and international healthcare providers and educators to deliver its strands of work. We also work with key national organisations such as Arts Council England and Youth Music, amongst others, to support the delivery and development of Music in Healthcare practice.

Past and current partners include:



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