



Dementia Music Cafés Explained

*“...a little piece of heaven in our week” –
Family Carer*



“It’s so lovely to see the joy the sessions bring to him and to others. Their ability to interact with each other and the music is fantastic” Carer

“I see him more focused in these workshops than in anything else he does all week” Carer

*“that was fantastic, I’m so glad I came” Person with dementia at
Dementia Cafe*

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Music in Mind Dementia Music Café Sessions

Our Dementia Music Café sessions are friendly, inclusive and improvisation-based music groups for people living with dementia and their carers. The person living with dementia should be accompanied by their carer, unless a separate arrangement has been agreed with the organisation running the Music Café.

“Honestly what you do and have given my mum (hope) that means to me you guys are unsung heroes...I literally cried happy tears”

Family carer

Music Champions lead the sessions enabling **participants to express themselves** through music, whether it is by using one of the musical instruments, their voices, by dancing or body percussion such as clapping, foot tapping etc. The Music Champions convey that there is no expectation to ‘get it right’. Instead, there is a sense of curiosity and total acceptance.

A selection of musical instruments is provided, and specially recorded music tracks can be used for creative and flexible improvising.

Music Champions are **trained by music therapists and musicians from Manchester Camerata Orchestra**. The sessions are run by our partners in each borough: Age UK, Mind, Together Dementia Support, The Fed, HMR Circle, Lighthouse Project, Bolton Dementia Support and Wigan Athletic.

Hints and Tips for Carers:

Whilst words can be used, particularly by the people with dementia, we encourage an approach where **the music speaks**. This provides a **level playing field for all people** in the room as regards interaction and communication, and it helps to create a musical community.

We invite carers to take part in the music making **themselves**, thereby allowing the person they are caring for to **make their own decisions** about when and how to contribute to the music, however large or small. **Importantly there are no right or wrong sounds to make.**

Music in Mind sessions can help the carer to **find new ways to communicate** with the person they are caring for. They can bring out a side to their loved one, which has become hidden by dementia. They can **build and strengthen relationships** and help participants reconnect with their identity. They will bring about a shared and creative “in-the-moment” presence for all.

About Music in Mind:

Manchester Camerata’s Music in Mind programme started in 2012 and is evidence based and informed by music therapy practice to improve the wellbeing of people living with dementia.

Links with the University of Manchester have resulted in high quality research findings over the years including a PhD *‘In the moment in music: an exploration of the embodied and sensory experiences of people living with dementia during improvised music-making’*.

More info about our research findings here: www.musicinmind.org/outcomes/evidence

There are Dementia Music Cafés in **all ten Greater Manchester boroughs**, and all participants are invited to be part of the associated research project.

For info about the Music in Mind programme, contact: musicinmind@manchestercamerata.com

