



**St Columba's  
Hospice**

CARE AND COMPASSION



**PLAYLIST  
FOR LIFE**

# Music to my ears: Implementing personalised music playlists in a Hospice Inpatient Unit (IPU)

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## Background

Creating individualised playlists for people living with a dementia has positive benefits including the reduction of behavioural and psychological symptoms<sup>1,2</sup>. Playlist for Life<sup>3</sup> is a charity which is committed to making such playlists easily accessible for all and believes that music which is meaningful can help people with dementia to reconnect with those important to them. As hospices across the UK have been urged to build skills needed to support people with dementia<sup>4</sup> we decided to implement Playlist for Life<sup>3</sup> within our IPU as a creative way of offering support to patients and their families.

## Aim

1. To enhance person-centred care offered to people with a dementia and their families
2. To use personalised playlists as a therapeutic tool to enrich connections between patients, families and staff

## Method

A practice development approach using collaboration, inclusion and participation<sup>5</sup> was used throughout including:

- A dementia/cognitive impairment multi-professional group to oversee the project
- Working with Playlist for Life<sup>3</sup> to support the development of our project
- Working with non-clinical departments to secure funding<sup>5,6</sup> and equipment
- Reflections on practice with the Hospice Practice Development Facilitator and clinical staff
- Written reflective accounts of all episodes of practice
- 1:1 and small group sessions with clinical staff

## Results

Although our initial aim was to work with people with a dementia, we have also worked with people with other forms of cognitive impairment and with no cognitive impairment. Using Playlist for Life<sup>3</sup> has:

- Enabled life story telling and reminiscing
- Supported the management of breathlessness and anxiety
- Increased sense of wellbeing
- Supported Advanced Care Planning
- Been a legacy for family members

Our next steps are to:

- Continue to establish an evidence base in a hospice setting through further evaluation
- Establish referral criteria

## Conclusion

Individualised music playlists are an effective therapeutic tool in a hospice setting.

**"It was amazing to see Jessie find the words to Magic Moments and sing this with her husband"** - Jen McLean: OT talking of her experience of using Playlist for Life with a patient with dementia in the last days of her life

**"It's taking me back to such lovely memories with my parents at home"** - A patient on the process of creating a Playlist

**"I Hear people's life stories their musical memories"** - Liz Collins: Therapies Assistant

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